



News for Immediate Release
May 2, 2007

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DWR Observes Water Awareness Month

SACRAMENTO -- California is marking its 20th annual observance of May as Water Awareness Month, promoting the message, "Use Water Wisely." Though California's snowpack and rainfall totals were modest this winter, high reservoir levels indicate generally adequate water supplies, with prudent use and conservation.

"California constantly faces uncertainty in our precipitation, not only in yearly variations in snow and rain, but also in shifting patterns of precipitation, associated with climate change," said Lester Snow, director of the Department of Water Resources (DWR). "Because water is so vital to California's people, environment and economy, we must consistently practice wise use and common-sense conservation."

Water Awareness Month originated in response to California's statewide drought in 1987-1992.

DWR is a leading water resources management and planning agency. It operates the State Water Project (SWP), which provides water to more than 24 million people and irrigates about 750,000 acres of farmland. The Department operates flood management and dam safety programs, performs water planning functions and works on Delta ecosystem and water issues.

DWR Regional Events

DWR is marking Water Awareness Month by taking part in regional events in Northern and Central California, including Oroville in Butte County and O'Neill Forebay near San Luis Reservoir west of Los Banos, and at several Southern California events.

O'Neill Forebay

On Saturday, May 12, the 18th annual Kids' Fishing Day will be held at O'Neill Forebay near San Luis Reservoir in Merced County. This traditional event is held at the San Luis Creek Recreational Area south beach at O'Neill Forebay, widely known as an excellent spot for striped bass fishing.

While the event is open free of charge to young anglers, 15 and under, a \$6 per car fee is charged for admission to the State Parks recreation area where the event is held.

Entrance to the fishing event is off State Highway 152 exit at the San Luis Creek Recreational Area turnoff, eight miles west of Interstate 5 and about 14 miles west of Los Banos.

For information on this event, contact DWR Guide Howard Berman at (209) 827-5353 or Jennifer Morgan in the local State Parks office at (209) 826-1196.

Oroville Celebration

On Saturday, May 12, in Oroville, DWR staffers will take part in a Jack Splash Children's Activity Booth in Parking Lot A downtown as part of Oroville's Feather Fiesta Days celebration. A fishing simulator will be the key attraction. Parking Lot A is located at Montgomery, Meyers and Huntoon streets, with the Oroville Municipal Auditorium as the backdrop.

For information on the DWR booth, contact Rosemary Martin at the Lake Oroville Visitor Center at (530) 538-2219. For information on the entire Feather Fiesta Days celebration period of May 5-13, contact the Oroville Area Chamber of Commerce at (530) 538-2542 or access the Chamber's Web site at www.oroillechamber.net.

Southern California

Staffers from DWR's Southern Field Division took part in a May 1-2 Water Education Festival in Irvine and a May 5 Castaic Lake Fun and Fishing Day. Still to come are the May 12 Castaic Lake Annual Open House, and the May 19-20 Palmdale Water Festival.

Visitor Centers

May marks the traditional start of vacation season and increased visitation at DWR's three Visitor Centers. These centers are: Vista del Lago at Pyramid Lake, near Gorman in northern Los Angeles County, just off Interstate 5; Romero Overlook Visitor Center at San Luis Reservoir, just off State Highway 152 in Merced County, west of Los Banos, and Lake Oroville Visitors Center, 917 Kelly Ridge Road, overlooking Lake Oroville, key Northern California storage reservoir for the State Water Project. Phone numbers: Vista del Lago --

(661) 294-0219. San Luis Reservoir -- (209) 827-5353. Lake Oroville -- (530) 538-2219.

Open free of charge to the public, the DWR visitor centers have exhibits, features and photos that tell the story of California's State Water Project and the importance of water in the daily lives of Californians.

The Oroville and Vista del Lago visitor centers are open daily except for Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day. The visitor center at San Luis Reservoir is open five days a week, but closed Wednesdays and Thursdays, as well as the Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day holidays.

The Department of Water Resources operates and maintains the State Water Project, provides dam safety and flood control and inspection services, assists local water districts in water management and water conservation planning, and plans for future statewide water needs.

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